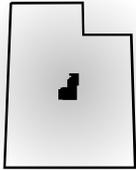


County Trends



Sanpete

March 2003

A Local Economic Perspective

The Economy is Just Limping Along. . .

Although job losses are moderating in Sanpete County, they haven't exactly disappeared. Fortunately, unemployment is holding steady and construction is hitting a bright note.

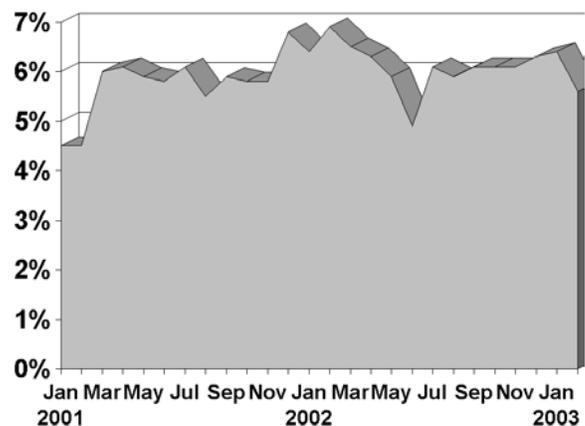
Not so Big

Sanpete County couldn't staunch the flow of employment losses during the third quarter of 2002 (the most current data available). In fact, the county's labor market has been limping along for more than a year—only peeking into positive territory once in more than a year. True, the most current losses aren't large—September 2002 employment was down less than 2 percent, a loss of about 120 positions. Nevertheless, Sanpete County's labor market is not showing any sound indication of recovery.

Remarkably, recession-sensitive manufacturing is one of the county's most robust industries. Between September 2001 and September 2002, manufacturing sported a net employment gain of roughly 60 positions.

Yet, most industries suffered from the economic malaise currently infecting Sanpete County. The losses weren't large. But, added together, these

Seasonally Adjusted Sanpete County Unemployment Rates

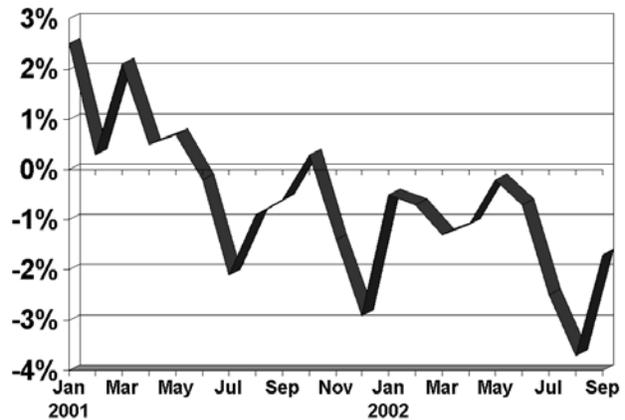


Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.





Year-Over Change in Sanpete County Employment



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.

To the Point

Sanpete County's labor market continued to limp along with noticeable job losses. Fortunately, unemployment rates have remained relatively stable most likely because many workers commute outside the county. Construction was the brightest spot in Sanpete's otherwise dreary economic picture.

small losses produced a rather dreary picture. Professional/business services, health services and accommodation/food services were among the primary job-lost. Even federal and state governments saw their employment levels decline. Construction employment also dropped slightly but may soon be buoyed by a surge in building permits.

(If you still aren't familiar with these new "NAICS" industry groupings, you aren't alone! Check out this website: <http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/Naics/dwsdefault.asp>)

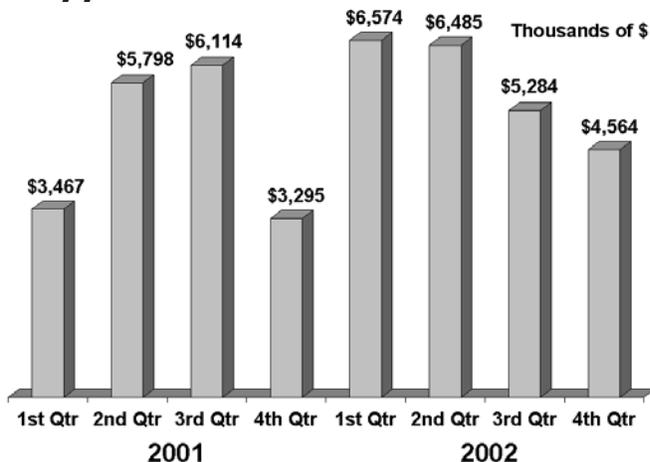
Despite disappointing employment growth, the jobless rate has remained relatively stable. The February 2003 figure measured 5.6 percent—below the national average. Many workers live in Sanpete County and commute elsewhere. This phenomenon may account for a stable unemployment rate even as employment declines. (Unemployment is measured by place of residence. Employment is measured by place of work.)

The Construction Ends with a Bang

It wasn't low interest rates or desires for country living that kept construction permitting the highlight of Sanpete County's economy. Most of the fourth quarter 2002 and annual construction were generated by commercial building. In fact, residential permits dropped by 15 percent between 2001 and 2002.

Ephraim and Mt. Pleasant permitted the lion's share of new nonresidential construction. In addition, Gunnison

**Total Sanpete County
Approved Construction Values**



Source: Utah Bureau of Economic & Business Research.



added to construction's well-being with a large contribution in the nonresidential additions category (the hospital addition).

Sales Slump

The county's gain in third quarter 2002 gross taxable sales was rather small—less than 3 percent. But, it was a gain. Something that couldn't be said for the preceding quarter. The county is coming down off the spectacular sales increases generated primarily by the new WalMart in 2000 and 2001. Sales in both retail trade and services proved moderate with wholesale trade suffering the only significant decline.

The Road Ahead. . .

Although the nation was on the track to recovery, current war fears seem to be derailing the economy. Since economics is based on human behavior rather than science, fears of a downturn often disintegrate into self-fulfilling prophecies. A quick war with Iraq would do much to prop-up consumer confidence and improve the national, state, and local economy. Otherwise, Sanpete County's economy may continue to stagnate.

Lecia Parks Langston, Regional Economist
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Quick Facts

February 2003

Unemployment Rate

Sanpete County	5.6%
Utah	5.3%
U.S.	5.8%

Sept 2002 Change from Previous Year

Job Growth

Sanpete County	-1.7%
Utah	-0.9%
U.S.	-0.7%

4th Qtr 2002 Change from Previous Year

Construction Values

Sanpete County	38.5%
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3rd Qtr 2002 Change from Previous Year

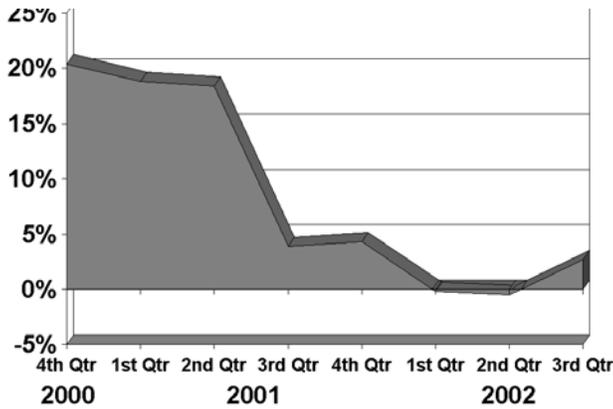
Sales

Sanpete County	2.7%
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Source: Utah Dept of Workforce Services,
 Bureau of Labor Statistics,
 Utah Tax Commission,

**For more economic information about Sanpete County see:
<http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/regions/county.asp>**

Year-Over Change in Sanpete County Gross Taxable Sales



Source: Utah Tax Commission.

The mission of the Utah Department of Workforce Services is to provide quality, accessible, and comprehensive employment-related and supportive services responsive to the needs of employers, job seekers, and the community.

What's Up? ⁴

- Construction of the new wing of the Gunnison Valley Hospital is complete. The \$4.5 million project adds 19,200 square feet to the existing hospital. Remodeling work will continue in areas of the facility that are currently occupied.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency approved a low interest loan of \$500,000 and a grant of \$810,000 for Manti's culinary water project.

For more economic events, see:

<http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/Regions/western/sanpete/sanpeteee.pdf>



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Equal Opportunity Employment Program

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